

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

LONGFELLOW'S TRAGEDIES.

THE NEW-ENGLAND TRAGEDIES. BY HENRY WADDELL LONGFELLOW. 12mo. pp. 172. Ticknor & Fields.

The grim features of Massachusetts Puritanism in the dark and bloody period of its history which thus volume commemorates can scarcely be made attractive by the most enticing refinements of the poetic art. Even the enchanting power of Hawthorne who colored them with the brilliant illusions of his wild imagination failed to divest them of their insidious repelliveness. Mr. Longfellow has given a more literal version of the events which he describes than our great romancer, presenting them for the most part in the prosaic simplicity of detail which marks the antiquated chronicles of the times, and adding little to the austere bareness of the narrative by any attempt at artistic embellishment.

The first tragedy is founded on the persecution of the Quakers in Boston, under the administration of Governor Endicott, and the second reproduces a prominent scene during the infatuation of the Salem Witchcraft. Mr. Longfellow finds an apology for the selection of his themes in the hope that they may teach a lesson of tolerance of opinion and freedom of speech. But it seems unnecessary in the present age to uncover those decaying remains of a baron superstition for such a purpose. When Lessing wrote his immortal drama of "Nathan the Wise" as a rebuke to religious prejudice and exclusiveness, the spirit of bigotry was rampant in the high places of the land, and could be assailed to advantage with weapons of such subtle power and refined temper. But it is to be hoped, that no one at this day needs the persuasions of Mr. Longfellow's melodious verse to refrain from persecuting his neighbor for differences of faith. The Church has pretty faithfully studied the lesson of charity, and the spirit which put to death the Quakers in Boston and the Witches in Salem has completely died out—except indeed among the Democratic politicians of the South, who hang and shoot their opponents in still the order of the day.

The first tragedy, entitled "John Endicott," opens on a Sunday afternoon in the interior of a Boston meeting-house, its pastor, the famous John Norton, in the pulpit, and Governor Endicott sitting in state, with a guard of halberdiers below. During the service, in which Norton denounces all the woes of the Apostles upon the heretics and shortcomings of the times, a fair young Quakeress, clad in sackcloth, with her hair hanging loose upon her shoulders, walks up the aisle, confronting the minister in his seat with her solemn testimony against the sheep-herds of Israel who feed themselves, and leave their flocks to eat what they had trodden beneath their feet. A tumult takes place in the congregation, Edith, the enthusiastic maiden, with the brethren who had accompanied her, is driven out with violence, the people disperse in confusion, while the priest and the Governor engage in ghostly counsel with each other. The next scene introduces us to a colony headed by Nicholas Upson, an old citizen of Boston who spread the religious infection of the times, and one Walter Merry, whose duty as a tythingman was to enforce the observance of the Sabbath. *[Exeunt.]*

The beautiful Edith is sentenced to be scourged and imprisoned, and while awaiting the infliction of the punishment, receives a visit from the son of Governor Endicott, which gives occasion to one of the most effective scenes in the poem.

The prison. Night. EDITH reading the Bible by a lamp.

"Blessed are ye which shall persecute you, and shall revile you, and shall say against you all manner of evil falsely, for so much as ye have done for me, and for exceeding grace, for great is your reward in heaven. For so to the prophets, which were before you, have been persecuted."

Enter JOHN ENDICOTT.

JOHN ENDICOTT.

EDITH.

EDITH.